

VZCZCXYZ0022
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUCNDT #1124 3391917
ZNR UUUUU ZZH CCY ADX00388BDD WSC1635 614
P 051917Z DEC 07 ZUI YR 0018W
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3265
INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1958

UNCLAS USUN NEW YORK 001124

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D COPY (ADDING MISSING TAG)

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR IO/UNP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OFDP](#) [BH](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: BHUTAN PERM REP COMPLAINT RE TREATMENT DURING
SCREENING AT NEWARK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

¶1. USUN received on December 3, 2007, a complaint (text in paragraph 3 below) from the Bhutan Mission to the UN protesting the treatment received by its Ambassador/Permanent Representative at Newark International Airport upon departure by Transportation Security Administration (TSA) personnel and by Continental Airlines personnel upon his departure from San Jose, Costa Rica as he returned to the U.S. The Bhutan Mission provided a copy of his boarding pass which was marked "SSSS" (a designation which subjects recipients to secondary screening). TSA had recently provided a special procedure for UN-accredited ambassadors who receive the "SSSS" designation on their boarding passes upon departure, and TSA agreed to communicate that special procedure to TSA personnel at NY-area airports. The Bhutan Ambassador/Permanent Representative appears to have identified himself in the proper manner but did not receive the benefit of such special procedure.

¶2. USUN has received numerous reports of UN-accredited diplomats being delayed at NY-area airports by various U.S. immigration authorities on arrival and departure, and these complaints are being voiced more frequently in the UN Committee on Relations with the Host Country, the forum in which USUN must respond.

¶3. Begin Text: The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bhutan to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United States Mission to the United Nations and has the honour to bring the following to the attention of the esteemed Mission.

H.E. Mr. Daw Penjo, Permanent Representative & Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bhutan to the United Nations recently traveled to Costa Rica to attend an official meeting. (November 8, 2007) H.E. the Ambassador traveled by Continental Airlines and his point of departure and arrival was from Newark International Airport.

¶1. While departing from Newark International Airport for Costa Rica the Ambassador was identified for special security screening. In keeping with the TSA screening procedure advice to diplomats accredited to the UN or the United States, the Ambassador identified himself as the Ambassador of Bhutan to the United Nations in New York, and presented both his diplomatic passport and diplomatic I.D. card issued by the U.S. Department of State. The TSA supervisor at Newark said that since the high security risk was labeled on the board pass, they have no alternative but to carry out the full screening i.e. both physical and inspection of all personal baggage.

¶2. On the Ambassador's return from Costa Rica, (November 11, 2007) he was again put through the same ordeal. In fact,

the Continental Airlines Supervisor/Manager was very rude when the Ambassador showed his U.S. State Department diplomatic I.D., he even commented saying that they do not recognize or honor any such IDs. Such a comment displayed a lack of professional courtesy, and a gross disregard to the Ambassador,s status as a senior diplomat.

¶3. On both occasions neither the TSA nor the airline was able to explain to the Ambassador as to why he had been identified as a "high security risk". While the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bhutan understands the need for security procedures, the screening officials should have at least accorded due recognition upon presentation of the Ambassador,s diplomatic passport and diplomatic I.D. card. The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bhutan also fails to understand on what grounds the Ambassador has been identified as a person of "high security risk", and would like to seek clarification on that regard.

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bhutan to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the United States Mission to the United Nations the assurances of its highest consideration. End Text.
Khalilzad